DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 191 045 CS 205 763

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TITLE The Influence of Dogmatism on Ethical Behavior of Journalistic Gatekeepers.
PUB DATE Aug 80
NOTE 34p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism (63rd, Boston, MA, August 9-13, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Beliefs: *Dogmatism: *Ethics: *Journalism: Relationship: *Research: Standards

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to discover the interrelationships of journalists' belief systems and ethical systems and in particular to learn whether knowing the degree to which a journalist is open minded or close minded could help predict his or her ethical decision-making processes. A group of 54 professional journalists, journalism students, and journalism teachers completed four instruments: (1) a 32-item Q-sort deck reflecting L. Kohlberg's six stages of moral development, as a measure of ethical orientations: (2) a 32-item Q-sort deck of statements reflecting eight frequently discussed ethical situations faced by reporters and editors, as a measure of patterns of ethical behavior: (3) the Rokeach Dogmatism Scale, Form E, to measure open-mindedness: and (4) a demographic questionnaire. Results showed that if levels of dogmatism and type of preparation of a journalist are known, it is possible to predict his or her ethical behavior. In addition, they showed that if levels of dogmatism and types of ethical behavior are known, it is possible to predict a journalist's stage of moral development. The findings also indicated a significant interaction between ethical orientations and ethical situational behavior such that open-minded journalists are more likely to be those engaged in positive ethical behavior with relatively high levels of moral development. (Copies of the Q-sort questions are appended.) (FL)

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ED191045

THE INFLUENCE OF DOGMATISM ON ETHICAL BEHAVIOR OF JOURNALISTIC GATEKEEPERS

A Research Paper

Submitted to

The Newspaper Division,

The Association for Education in Journalism

1980 National Convention

Boston, Mass.

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THE INFLUENCE OF DOGMATISM ON ETHICAL BEHAVIOR OF JOURNALISTIC GATEKEEPERS

INTRODUCTION

About the same time David Manning White earned his PhD and fame by probing the content of a wire editor's beliefs and resultant gatekeeping behavior, social psychologist Milton Rokeach was warning us that an adequate study of anyone's belief systems should not be based on the content of beliefs but rather their structure. (1) For the past three decades, theses and journal articles seeking clues to gatekeepers' motivations and belief systems more often than not have based their conclusions on White-like inferences drawn from systematic analyses of newspaper pages and editors' wastebaskets. In so doing, researchers ignore Rokeach's argument that any such inferential investigation of belief and ideology includes the inherent danger that the investigator's own value judgments may bias the research, but that concentration on structure rather than content of beliefs minimizes such danger. (2) Rokeach's position is shared by Lawrence Kohlberg, the Harvard psychologist whose recent studies on moral development also hold great promise for gatekeeping research. Kohlberg has demonstrated (3) that concentration on the reasoning process or structure rather than content is a valid indicator of the moral or ethical potential and behavior of individuals. In short, by following the lead set by Rokeach and Kohlberg, we should improve upon our current level of insights into why news reporters and editors make the gatekeeping decisions they do. Therefore, the purpose of this investigation was to discover the interrelationships of belief systems and ethical systems, and in particular to learn whether knowing the degree to which a gatekeeper is open- or closed-minded could help us predict his or her ethical decision-making processes.

BELIEF SYSTEMS

Combining personality theory, ideology studies, and cognitive theory, Rokeach and his colleagues studied the relation and basic unity between belief and thought. Years of laboratory experiments indicated a significant positive correlation between ideology and problem solving behavior and between perceptual and esthetic systems, while uncovering basic structural properties binding all these systems together. Using a simple pencil and paper test, Rokeach was able to measure the extent to which persons' minds are relatively open or closed as well as gauging subjects' analytical patterns.

Empirical testing led Rokeach to form a general, detailed statement of the defining characteristics of open and closed systems. His working distinction between open and closed minds showed that:

A Belief-Disbelief System Is

Open	Closed
A. to the extent that, with respect to its organization along the belief-disbelief continuum,	
1. the magnitude of rejection of disbelief subsystems is relatively low at each point along the continuum;	1. the magnitude of rejection of disbelief subsystems is relatively high at each point along the continuum;
2. there is communication of parts within and between belief and disbelief systems;	2. there is isolation of parts within and between belief and disbelief systems;
3. there is relatively little discrepancy in the degree of differentiation between belief and disbelief systems;	3. there is relatively great discrepancy in the degree of differentiation between belief and disbelief systems;
4. there is relatively high differentiation within the disbelief system;	4. there is relatively little differentiation within the disbelief system;
B. to the extent that, with respect to the organization along the central-peripheral dimension,	

1. the specific content of primitive beliefs (central region) is to the effect that the world one lives in, or the situation one is in at a particular moment, is a friendly one;	1. the specific content of primitive beliefs (central region) is to the effect that the world one lives in, or the situation one is in at a particular moment, is a threatening one;
2. the formal content of beliefs about authority and about people who hold to systems of authority (intermediate region) is to the effect that authority is not absolute and that people are not to be evaluated (if they are to be evaluated at all) according to their agreement or disagreement with such authority;	2. the formal content of beliefs about authority and about people who hold to systems of authority (intermediate region) is to the effect that authority is absolute and that people are to be accepted and rejected according to their agreement with such authority;
3. the structure of beliefs and disbeliefs perceived to emanate from authority (peripheral region) is such that its substructures are in relative communication with each other, and finally;	3. the structure of beliefs and disbeliefs perceived to emanate from authority (peripheral region) is such that its substructures are in relative isolation with each other, and finally;
C. to the extent that, with respect to the time-perspective dimension, there is a	
1. relatively broad time perspective	1. relatively narrow future-oriented time perspective. (4)

Rokeach's definiation in tabulation form provided him with a set of theoretical blueprints to guide the construction of the many statements he was to use in his paper and pencil psychological test which was shown to measure how open or closed a person's belief system is. The definition also provided him with a large body of testable hypotheses, many of which are of particular importance to the present study and which will be so noted. Perhaps the broadest use which the tabulated definition could serve came with Rokeach's utilization of it to draw together a simple, basic definition of dogmatism: The basic characteristic that defines the extent to which a person's system is open or closed is the extent to which the person can receive, evaluate, and act on relevant information received from the outside on its own intrinsic merits, unencumbered by irrelevant factors in the situation arising from within the person or from the outside. (5)

There are numerous manifestations of this general distinction between open and closed belief systems. As Rokeach noted, the more open one's belief system, the more should evaluating and acting on information proceed independently on its own merits; the more should the person be governed in the actions by internal self-actualizing forces and the less by irrational inner forces; the more should the person be able to resist pressures exerted by external sources to evaluate and to act in accordance with their wishes; the more strength should the person have to resist externally imposed reinforcements, or rewards and punishments (which should be less effective as determinants of the way information will be evaluated and acted upon); the easier it should be to distinguish between information received about the "world" and information received about the "source" during a communication or persuasion situation, and therefore, the easier it should be to receive, evaluate, and act on information on the basis of its intrinsic value divorced from the perceived value of the source. The more open the belief system, Rokeach maintained, the more will the dual nature of communication received (information about the source, and information about the world) be appreciated and responded to with discernment, each piece being weighed on its own merits; conversely, the more closed the system, the less cognitive discrimination to be expected between the two sets of information, beliefs, and consequent actions. (6)

From Rokesch's further distinctions about the structure and context of the belief-disbelief continuum, the central-peripheral dimension, and the time-perspective dimension we are led to suggest that gatekeeping behavior can be better understood: The more closed the system, the more is the acceptance of a particular belief dependent upon irrelevant inner drives and/or arbitrary reinforcements from external authority such as news sources or office superiors. The more closed a system, the more sensitive would the gatekeepers be to communications, reinforcements, warnings, prohibitions, and promises issuing forth from the journalists' own groups or authorities, and the more will the

journalists be dependent on such positive authorities for information accumulated about a particular disbelief subsystem. Information about disbelief subsystems, if received at all, would come second-hand, spoon-fed by the gatekeepers' positive authorities. Therefore, it would follow that the inability to distinguish the dual aspects of communications should in time lead not only to a stronger acceptance of the belief system but also to a stronger rejection of all disbelief subsystems, as well as leading to a greater discrepancy between knowledge about their belief systems and their disbelief subsystems. It should also lead to less differentiation within the disbelief system as a whole, and to an increasing inability to distinguish among disbelief subsystems, the more dissimilar they are from the belief system. Therefore, with respect to the organization of the belief-disbelief continuum as a whole, Rokeach said it would follow that the following are all defining characteristics of openness--closedness: degree of rejection of disbelief subsystems, degree of differentiation of belief systems as compared with disbelief systems, and degree of differentiation within the disbelief systems. (7)

With respect to the central-peripheral dimension, a similar group of structural and contexutal assumptions are particularly germane to the open and closed mind of the news reporter and editor. Rokeach noted that the more a system is closed, the more the world is seen as threatening, the greater is the belief in absolute authority and the more peripheral beliefs are related to each other by virtue of the common origin in authority, as we evaluate other persons according to the authorities they line up with rather than evaluating the intrinsic connections of their ideas. Conversely, the more open the belief system, the less should beliefs held in common be a criterion for evaluating others, and the more should others be positively valued, regardless of their beliefs. In other words, the alternative to accepting and rejecting others on grounds of belief congruence is to accept others without evaluating them at all. (8)

With respect to the time-perspective, an open-minded journalist would have a balanced perspective of the past, present, and future. Information would be evaluated on its own merits, but with a disciplined concern with the immediate, foreseeable future. Predictions and plans are continually made on the basis of information, and the way these predictions and plans turn out helps along the evaluative process. So it is with postdiction, which implies a realistic evaluation or re-evaluation of the past terms of the present. A closed-minded journalist would be overly concerned with the remote future or the remote past; the main cognitive basis would be missing from the distinction between the immediate and remote future, and because knowledge about the remote future is impossible to refute, the journalist can be safely preoccupied with it. (9)

These distinctions between open and closed systems lend themselves to several additional working hypotheses about journalists (and, incidentally, about journalism audiences). In terms of the belief-disbelief dimension, one might hypothesize that open-minded journalists would tolerate information about their disbeliefs without rejecting it as a piece or without failing to differentiate it from other information in that disbelief system; they would accept news about both their beliefs and disbeliefs regardless of the source or authority of the news; they would be nearly as capable of discriminating among information in their disbelief systmes as they are of discriminating that within their belief systems.

In terms of the central-peripheral dimension, reporters and editors (and news audiences) who were open-minded would not have conflict and threat as their primary definitions of news. They would not evaluate people and organizations primarily in terms of the authorities they lined up with, but would perceive them independently. Likewise, they could evaluate news independently of the authority figures or spokesmen who are creating or disseminating that news. While it is the nature of the journalist to evaluate and judge people, words, and events, the open-minded journalist would not perceive prior to observing, and the open-minded news audience member would do likewise

In terms of the time-perspective dimension, open-minded journalists and news audiences would have a pragmatic sense of the here and now, with an appreciation of the past and a rational degree of prediction about the forseeable future. They would sense multiple causality, and not seek simple explanations for complex occurrences.

Finally, concerning Rokeach's general conclusions about authoritarianism and intolerance as indices of dogmatism, there are several hypotheses relevant to journalistic behavior. For example, it would seem safe to hypothesize that open-minded journalists who did not sense threats from authority figures would be better capable of discriminating among incoming information, and would be better able to evaluate that information fairly and pass it along without bias, or as objective news. Given the journalists' role, it appears that responsible journalists would want to have freedom from threats to their beliefs, but would also want to continue to be curious about information dealing with both their beliefs and disbeliefs.

The open-minded journalists (and their counterparts in the media audience) would appear to be fulfilling the task of disseminating news in a democracy in a superior fashion if they were free of absolute beliefs about positive and negative authority. If they could do so, it follows from Rokeach that there would be less glorification of positive authority figures and decreasing vilification of negative ones, there would be an increased tendency to accept the legitimacy of many causes, and there would be the acceptance of all classes and ranks in society, and not just the elite. Open-minded journalists, it could be added, would go so far as to seem to have little respect for the authoritative nature of some individuals and roles; to the non-dogmatists, people are basically equal or at least to be treated as equals. This can be seen in the healthy skepticism—not cynicism—of many journalists.

ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS

By now it should be apparent that there is some sort of relationship between the structure of journalistic belief systems—their relative openness or closedness—

and the types of moral judgments journalists bring to their daily work. For insights into this possibility, we turn to Kohlberg, whose work concentrates on the underlying motivations or orientations of individuals. As we suggested in our introduction to this study, we are dissatisfied with the plethora of research centering on "quandary ethics" because of its concern with overt behavior; rather, we are interested in answering why journalists are likely to behave as they do. Kohlberg's many years of research on sequences of moral development holds promise for researchers seeking indications of the moral or ethical potential and behavior of those who are determinors of mass media content.

Kohlberg is not primarily concerned with the content of individual moral choices but the reasoning or structure underlying such choices. By "structure" is meant the types of considerations a person uses in resolving a moral problem and the principles or logic by which these considerations are tied together. (10) Kohlberg suggests that moral development is sequentially oriented, developing through a series of six stages. The stages are of increasing complexity, with each building upon and expanding the reasoning of the stage before. Data generated by Kohlberg, and the theoretical structure he has formulated, suggest an exploration of the underlying moral or ethical structure of those who have direct influence upon the mass media. Such an exploration could provide data that would allow a "typing" of each individual respondent according to his or her current "stage" or moral development, provide [illegible] for a longitudinal study of ethical development of mass communicators, allow comparisons with other professional and vocational groups, and provide data for predictin ethical development according to the background of the communicator.

A pressing question in this regard revolves around the moral values, or, as Kohlberg suggests, the structure from which judgments are made, of those who determine the content of the mass media. Probably a most important dividing line, in Kohlberg's frame of reference, is the difference between a morality that develops

as a visceral response to experiences and what he called a "principled morality" that develops in response to the development of the "capacity to think about thought (moral judgment) rather than to think about persons, events, institutions." (11) This sometimes is referred to as the philosopher aspect of the individual. Thus, from a moral standpoint, it seems important to determine the capacity of the media gatekeepers to be philosophers, rather than craftsmen. A philosopher, it is assumed, will have greater capacity to ponder the social principles necessary for living together with others. Such ponderings ought, then, to produce greater responsibility in communications.

Kohlberg suggests that "concrete operations" are necessary for conventional morality to develop and "formal operations" are necessary for "principled morality" to develop. The suggestion here, of course, is that the type of ethics or morality needed in the mass media today may not "come naturally" to the communicator, but mus be the result of formalized preparation. (12)

In arriving at his understanding of the separate stages of ethical development Kohlberg administered a complex series of problem-solving case studies for subjects to work through. To study Kohlberg's ultimate premises, in the present study we devised a 32-item Q-sort that reflects each of the six stages of moral development. The statements are included as Appendix A to this study; the stages they attempted to reflect are as follows:

STAGE I: The morality of arbitrary fixed rules, obedience to power and avoidance of punishment. Rules are assumed as arbitrary and fixed regardless of the purpose or motives of the actor. If there is "conscience" involved, it is only the irrational fear of punishment; the social perspective is ego-centered, the individual failing to consider the interests of others or recognize that they differ from his or her own. At the same time, the individual confuses his or her own perspective with that of the authority who is giving out rewards or punishment.

STAGE II:The morality of instrumental egoism and exchange. As in teleological egoism, individuals at this stage behave in order to be rewarded. Judgments of what is right or wrong derive from questions over what will serve individuals' own self interests, pleasure, and welfare, and, under certain conditions, the interests of others who are perceived as being similar to the actors. Actions are "right" if they serve the individuals' interests and desires. People use other people knowing that the roles are readily reversible , and others would use them if needed. Laws and codes are followed or broken not because they are right or wrong, but because of self-serving expediencies. Doing one's own thing is fully appropriate so long as one does not get caught. The social perspective of this stage is an awareness that everybody has his or her own interests to pursue and that these conflict, so "right" is relative.

STAGE III: The morality of interpersonal concordance, of mutual interpersonal expectations, relationships, and interpersonal conformity. Acts are good and right if they are based on pro-social motives, since an overriding concern of people at this stage is an awareness of what other people think of them, and a desire to maintain generally positive relationships among people. As noted by Breed, journalists are often aware that being a good team player is sometimes more important to their career advancement than folloiwng their own good intentions. Behavior is judged as right and good on the basis of whether the act was motivated by pro-social intentions. Pecking orders are established, and decisions are made based on maintaining of improving one's standing in the pecking order. As is true of most pecking orders, people within them tend to think of each other in stereotypical terms. Points of view are related through the concrete Golden Rule, putting oneself in the other (specific, no generalized) person's shoes.

STAGE IV: The morality of rules, law and duty to the social order. Here "right" is defined by categorical rules, binding on all members of society; violation of the rules is seen as causing damage to all of society. Since a stable social order is of paramount importance at this stage, categorically and uniformly applied rules are appropriate. The society in question is much broader than the personal relationships in question at Stage III. (At the third stage rules could be broken if done for positive pro-social reasons: Watergate was justified by some politicians and functionaries who felt loyal to Richard Nixon, and group norms overshadowed broader social questions.) At the fourth stage people are concerned that society runs smoothly and chaos is avoided. Roles are played: Conflicts between diverging sets of laws or ethical pressures are handled with some difficulty. (A journalist at Stage IV whose newspaper has a code of ethics but who believes the public need to know some information available only if the code is violated is likely to face much dissonance, but would probably come down on the side of the code and law since they are more specific than the abstract "public interest." The problem at Stage IV is not knowing how to determine when one's conscience is right or when the cause one believes in is just.

STAGE V: The morality of social contract and social utility and individual rights. Here we see morality not as a means for maintaining society, but as a reflection of the very reasons we have societies in the first place. As a general rule the means do not justify the ends. While circumstances justify periodic deviant acts, they do not make it right or lead to the suspension of moral categories. When they reach this stage, people recognize that the rule systems (codes, laws, what have you) mandated in earlier stages were simply one or two of many logically possible rule systems. Once they recognize this, the door is opened for the restructuring of society's rules into broader moral principles, all of them rationally devised. What would rational people conclude, and what will they accept? There must be a search for agreement, not based on majority opinion, but upon lines of reasoning

which any logical social being could adhere to. At this stage social institutions represent the kind of contract rational people have made with each other; institutions are relative and somewhat arbitrary, subject to change when circumstances and moods (i.e., rational moods) demand. Laws are major definers of moral obligation, as they were in Stage IV. However, before a law is obligatory at Stage V it must be consistent with individual rights and with the interests and welfare of the majority. The individual's obligation to law is part of the social contract inherent in living in society. Utilitarian arguments for codes and laws are seen; laws and codes are there to serve the greatest good for the greatest number of people. If laws conflict with basic human rights, such as the right to live, the basic human rights will take precedence, since reasonable people cannot be expected to throw away their basic rights A Stage V person considers both moral and legal viewpoints, and when recognizing that they sometimes conflict finds it difficult to integrate them.

STAGE VI:The morality of universal ethical principles. At this stage, reached by a limited number of people, the principles involved are the principle of justice, of equal consideration of the claims of all human beings, and the principle of respect for personality, of treating human beings as ends in themselves. (These two principles are basically equivalent because to treat each person as an end in himself implies treating each person as morally equal.) Moving from Stage V to Stage VI, people recognize that there must be some moral obligations and values valid for all humanity, regardless of law and social agreement. But these moral ideals and rules aren't defined as rational moral principles except by those few persons who reach this final stage of moral development. Once there, the principles provide a general rational guide to moral decisions, a means of resolving conflicts. Like Kant, adherents of moral principles firmly believe that the categorical imperatives make as much sense for the rest of humanity as they do for themselves. Humanistic principles reflect a sense of obligation to all human life. Conscience and principle are more to be valued

than law. Ultimately, moral choices which would injure the self-concept and social standing of individuals at lower stages are made by Stage VI adherents without reference to personal and ultimately egoistic sentiments of self-blame and loss of integrity. Journalists operating at this stage would not typically be Guild members would probably reject codes of ethics, would probably find themselves moving from paper to paper until they found an "ivory tower" position or one where they had "star reporter" status and could circumvent office norms. Our guess is that they would more likely be found among the ranks of columnists and editorial writers than among the beat reporters, but such a guess is at present unsubstantiated. It is probably safe to say, however, that journalists with this principled morality would not fit well in the average newsroom, as they would display characteristics of Merrill's "existential journalist" (13) and Johnstone's "participant journalist." (14) Establishmentarians and neutralists they aren't.

AL SITUATIONS

Based on Whitlow and Van Tubergen's study of ethical patterns reflected by participants in the 1978 Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) conference, (15) we developed a 32-item Q deck of statements that reflected eight frequently discussed ethical situations faced by news reporters and editors. This aspect of the present study was included as an empirical anchor: Whitlow and Van Tubergen succeeded in pinpointing, with a great deal of discrimination, patterns of specific ethical behavior in journalists, and we wished to study the relationship between those patterns and our own concerns over ethical orientations and belief systems. Therefore we are not getting away from our central purpose of determining interrelationships of cognitive and ethical structure, but are merely relating them to previously validated patterns of cognitive and ethical content.

The eight kinds of ethical situations selected for the study were culled from anecdotal material discussed by writers such as Hulteng (16), Merrill (17), Swain (18), Merrill and Barney (19), and others(20), coupled with discussions with working reporters, journalism educators, and personal experience. Appendix B shows the full text of the 32 statements; the eight categories of ethical quandaries are as follows:

a) Dilemmas arising out of a conflict between reporters' professional ethics and reporters' personal self-interest;

b) Dilemmas representing different interpretations of what reporters should do about protecting their confidential sources of information;

c) Dilemmas involving the acceptance of special privileges (favors, gifts, opportunities) that arise from reporting jobs, and that would probably not be available to journalists if they were not reporting;

d) Dilemmas arising from requests to suppress legitimate news that journalists have worked to uncover;

e) Dilemmas arising from reporters' awareness that events might be influenced by the reporting process;

f) Problems arising from the practice of offering special favors, including money or favored treatment, to sources who promise important news tips or exclusive interviews to reporters;

g) Difficulties arising from reporters' attempts to conceal or misrepresent their role and/or motivations;

h) Problems involving surreptitious means of obtaining information if such reporting techniques may put the reporter in conflict with the law.

HYPOTHESES

Given our understandings of belief systems, ethical orientations, and specific ethical decisions of journalism gatekeepers, several specific hypotheses suggest themselves. For the present study, we hypothesized that:

1. Dogmatism and background preparation of journalists will be significant predictors of ethical situational behavior.

2. Dogmatism and ethical situational behavior will be significant predictors of journalists' ethical orientations.

3. Ethical situational behavior will interact significantly with ethical orientations, such that journalists demonstrating highly positive ethical behavior and highly developed ethical orientations will be significantly more open-minded than will journalists demonstrating less positive ethical behavior and less highly developed ethical orientations.

METHODOLOGY

Our research tool consisted of two 32-item Q decks (one measuring ethical orientations, ala Kohlberg, the second measuring ethical situations, ala Whitlow and Tubergen), the Rokeach Dogmatism Scale, Form E, the Gough-Sanford Rigidity Scale, and a demographic questionnaire.

The ethical orientations deck was devised in a short time frame in order to take advantage of a unique data collection opportunity--the November, 1978 national convention of the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, in Birmingham Alabama--and in this, its preliminary form, the items were neither pretested nor submitted to an expert panel which could double check face validity. Essentially, the statements were reworked and paraphrased from significant findings published by Kohlberg and others.

The Q sort reflecting ethical situations, as previously described, was created to force responses to eight different types of journalistic dilemmas. After subjects conducted separate sorts for the two 32-item decks, they completed the randomized statements from Rokeach and Gough-Sanford. We included the Rigidity Scale in our study because of expectations that it might relate positively with Dogmatism, but have not pursued its relevence in the present report. The demographic questionnaire asked respondents' age, sex, academic preparation, current and past employment.

Q-methodology was employed for the major portion of the study because of its ability to probe, describe, and analyze behavioral dimensions; as a tool for guaging subjective behavior, it has been widely employed.[21] For each of the two decks, subjects were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with the items by arranging each deck in a forced distribution Q-sort. Each deck of items was shuffled to avoid pattern error. The Situations Deck was administered before the Orientations Deck, because of speculation that subjects would more readily respond to the complex sorting task by beginning with a relatively concrete rather than with a relatively abstract set of statements.

About 50 persons attending the national SPJ/SDX meeting--primarily journalists employed on newspapers, but also several journalism students and teachers--completed all or part of the study. After the convention, data from several more professionals were added, bringing the sample of respondents for the study to 61. Of these, 54 completed the entire study, and are included in this report. Separate factor analyses were performed on the two sorts supplied by these subjects. Factor analysis employed the principle axis method, but communality estimates were from the first centroid factor, because the number of variables in these analyses was greater than the number of observations. Typal means of the Dogmatism Scales were compared with ethical situation and ethical orientation analysis of variance.

RESULTS

Belief Systems: The most significant conclusion to be drawn from the measurement of open- and closed-mindedness is seen when dogmatism mean scores of journalists are correlated with different typal groups revealed in the ethical orientations and ethical situations sorts. Those statistics will be presented momentarily. However, it should be reported that overall dogmatism scores ranged from a high of 194 to a low of 72, with a mean score of 141.5. This mean score was significantly lower than national norms reported by Alter and White. (22) In their compilation of results from some 12,977 subjects, the over-all mean dogmatism score was 159.21. Their sample consisted primarily of student populations, but also included scientists, medical specialists, industrial department heads, therapists, and others. In general, the journalists studied in the present study scored comparable to the professional groups investigated by Alter and White. Indeed, only 12 of our 54 journalists scored above the national mean of 159.21, tempting us to suggest that journalists who attend national SPJ/SDX conferences may be somewhat more open-minded than the public at large

Ethical Orientations: Three distinct factors emerged in the ethical orientations phase of the study. We have labeled these types X, Y, and Z. Type X is the largest, with 24 members; type Y has 18, and type Z 12 members.

All three groups demonstrated logical progression through early Kohlberg stages of moral development, with the overwhelming majority of them (Types X and Y) leveling off at Kohlberg's Stage 5—a demonstration to us that most journalists in the sample have thought through ethical problems and appear motivated by feelings of social contract and social utility.

Type X shows logical progression through all six stages of moral development. The male-dominated factor is concerned with the values of professional codes and honoring professional commitments to peers and outsiders with whom they deal. This kind of journalist does not believe the ends justify the means; he or she willingly

allows periodic deviancy while holding to moral principles. In short, he or she is a humanist, and uses journalism as a means for serving and preserving society--and has little interest in making a profession out of journalism if it has to mean everyone in the business must follow an inviolable universal code that would probably be more concerned with serving the interests of the profession than those of society. These perspectives emerge from the many years of practical experience in news editorial jobs the average Type X journalist is likely to have had, and perhaps from earlier groundwork laid down in journalism school. Type X is quite open-minded, with a mean score of 135.6 on the Dogmatism Scale.

Type Y is quite similar to type X, having progressed fairly logically through the Kohlberg stages (although demonstrating a greater rejection of Stage 3 statements concerned with interpersonal concordance and team play than with Stage 2 statements about instrumental egoism and exchange). Type Y is unconcerned with codes of ethics, supporting conscience and principle over such formalized strictures. He or she has a sense of individualism and fair play, and is willing to violate laws in order to operate in the public interest. The fairly well educated and youthful Type Y journalist is also quite open-minded, with a mean score of 135.5.

Type Z journalists are the mirror image, in ethical orientation and open-mindedness, of the dominant factors. Far more concerned with rules, law, and a sense of duty to keeping social order than the other types, Type Z's high scores on the Dogmatism Scales (163.4) demonstrate a cognitive fixedness that would appear more comfortable with such rules and laws than with having to judge news articles and reporting situations on abstract and subtle grounds such as Stage 5 journalists from Types X and Y. More likely to be female than male (5 females and 7 males, from a total population of 36 males and 18 females), the Type Z journalist is just

getting started in the profession, and has probably not yet faced many of the ethical problems posed by the study. Some reactions were probably visceral, some idealistic; but a readily discernible pattern emerged as this young journalist completed our study: an unwillingness to question authority figures, whether supervisors or sources; an unwillingness to chance losing out in the team pecking order as the price for individuality, and the expectation of punishment for deviant behavior, even if such behavior was professionally motivated. Such a journalist displays many of the conservative traits Johnstone attributed to "neutralists," but couples them with professionally limiting characteristics.

Ethical Situations: As in the ethical orientations phase of the study, three distinct factors seemed to provide the best explanation of the situation sort. We have labeled these types A, B, and C. Type A was the largest, with 28 members; Type B had 16 and Type C 10 members.

Type A demonstrates compassion for news sources and audiences, a sensitivity to personal rights, and a disdain for manipulation. Type A rejects the idea of freebies, having sex with sources, stealing to make a story a success, and would reluctantly go to jail before revealing a confidential source. He or she is likely to have many years of news editorial experience, to have a degree in journalism, and to be fairly open-minded (133.8 on the Dogmatism Scale).

Type B appears driven by the desire to "get the story," by whatever means, so long as innocent third parties are not wronged. Dedication to the public's right to know is manifest in Type B's as determination to manipulate all their personal and physical sources. Interestingly, since females have a greater statistical chance than males to fall into Type B behavior (7 females, 9 males), they are also willing to use sex as a reportorial tool. The typical Type B is still in or barely out of journalism school, although he or she is also quite likely to have a graduate degree; therefore Type B may not have "put to the test" some of the rhetoric or myths

learned at the feet of journalism professors. However, while picking up the myths of journalism, when compared with Types A and C our Type B journalist doesn't appear to be doing much about gaining a broad-minded perspective on the world--despite the argument that the university is ostensibly the training ground for open-mindedness. Type B's dogmatism mean was 155.2, the highest of the three situational types.

Type C, the smallest of the three groups, is less readily categorized, but appears to engage in expedience and situational ethics except for a strong commitment to the idea of protecting the identity of confidential sources. A strongly male-dominated group, Type C has limited professional experience, is more likely than either of the other types to have an advanced degree in journalism, and is fairly open-minded (mean Dogmatism score 141.0).

Hypotheses: Some of the more striking assertions made in the previous discussion warrant testing beyond the descriptive level. We briefly report the results of two discriminant analyses and a 3 x 3 factorial ANOVA which lend support to several assertions, while also pointing to a previously acknowledged weakness.

In the first discriminant analysis, Situation Type was taken as the dependent variable and dogmatism, age, educational background, sex, and Orientation Type were independent variables. The best prediction of Situation Type arose from two significant discriminant functions involving dogmatism, educational background, and age. These two functions explained a total of 35% of the variance in Situation Type (26% in the first function, 9% in the second). These functions correctly classified 65% of the original gatekeeper sample into their ethical behavior group; it correctly classified 75% of Group A, 63% of Group B, and 40% of Group C.

The variables in the second discriminant analysis were the same, except Orientation Type was taken as dependent while Situation Type was included with the independent variables. The best prediction arose from a single significant discriminant function which involved dogmatism and Situation Type; the function explained about 27% of the variance in Orientation Type. Classification of the original cases was also a bit weaker in this analysis, with a little over 44% correct classifications. The function correctly classified 67% of Group Z, 50% of Group Y, and only 29% of Group X. The inclusion of a second, non-significant discriminant function in the classification procedure substantially improves the accuracy of predicting Group X, but reduces correctness for Group Y.

These two analyses demonstrate several points: 1) Dogmatism is substantially related to both ethical behavior and ethical orientation; 2) Educational background (major in college) does contribute to the prediction of ethical behavior; 3) The weaker classification accuracy for Group C illustrates the somewhat residual character of that typal pattern; 4) The generally weaker ability to predict Orientation Type coupled with the fact the Situation Type helps predict Orientation Type but not vice versa, again illustrate the need for development work on our Kohlberg instrument.

With respect to this last point, the relationship between ethical behavior and ethical orientation was also tested separately using a 3 x 3 ANOVA design. The aforementioned weaknesses in the Orientation instrument notwithstanding, a significant ($p<.001$) interaction was found between these two variables. As might be expected, this result was largely attributable to the significant ($p<.01$) difference between the AX cell and the BZ cell ($t=3.93$).

CONCLUSIONS

This study, admittedly a preliminary investigation, has helped us uncover patterns of ethical situations and ethical orientations in selected journalists, and has allowed us to contrast these situations and orientations with previously validated measures of their open- or closed-mindedness. In the small sample format appropriate to Q methodology, we have uncovered patterns of behavior and belief that are likely to exist in the larger population of journalism gatekeepers. Once refined, our tool will be used on a large sample of journalists and other mass media practitioners to guage relative profiles. At this juncture, our conclusions are tentative, but strong statistical evidence for this small sample indicates to us that if we know the levels of dogmatism and type of background preparation a journalistic gatekeeping group possesses, we can predict their ethical behavior; that if we know their levels of dogmatism and the types of ethical behavior they choose, we can begin to predict their stage of ethical development as discussed by Kohlberg; and finally that there is a significant interaction between ethical orientations and ethical situational behavior, so that open-minded journalists will likely be found among those engaged in positive ethical behavior and relatively high levels of ethical development.

Our preliminary study tempts us to conclude that the largest proportion of journalists in our sample--admittedly, a group disproportionately committed to professionalism--appear to have given serious thought to their craft. The longer they have been on the jon, the more likely they are to be open-minded and thoughtfully responsible. The majority are anything but the narrow-minded curmudgeons popular rhetoric tells us we can expect to find in America's newsrooms.

Unfortunately, if you'll permit us one more value judgment, many of the younger journalists, fresh out of or still in journalism school, display disturbing tendencies toward closed-mindedness and knee-jerk reactions to ethical dilemmas.

They echo the myths of the craft, perhaps as taught to them by journalism professors who themselves just might be substituting "seat of the pants epistemology" for thoughtful, critical analysis.

It may be that years of seasoning in journalism will inculcate open-mindedness in gatekeepers. If so, and if there is validity to our preliminary investigations, that also may mean that today's young journalists will become tomorrow's ethical gatekeepers.

It behooves those of us interested in the ethical development and behavior of journalists to pick up where we think this investigation leaves us--with an awareness that there are significant differences of opinion in the journalism profession over what constitutes ethical performance, and a need for much more study of the underlying motivations and manifestations of that performance.

# # #

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APPENDIX A:

ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS SORT

STAGE I Statements:

1. The best basis I can think of for choosing how to act is whether what I do is likely to get me into trouble with the people I work with or for--or maybe even with the law.

2. Some people will break laws and go to jail to uphold their profession's ethics; to me that sort of punishment just isn't worth it.

3. It seems to me that in this life, it's an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. That is, I am bound to be treated by others in the same way as I treat them in the course of doing my job.

4. It seems to me that any violation of ethical standards in a profession should be dealt with immediately and to the fullest extent allowed by the profession's code or the law.

5. It's important to keep a promise to influential people with whom you have to work because if you don't, they'll take steps to get even with you somehow.

STAGE II Statements:

6. Mixing with impressively influential people--as I often do in my professional life--has been highly satisfying.

7. Good professionals over the years build up a set of contacts who are very important to them. Since these contacts are valuable and hard to come by, I try to give them special treatment.

8. I am constantly aware that many of the people I deal with in my profession need me as much as--if not more than--I need them.

9. To get to the top in my profession, I know that I may have to anger and probably hurt some people; if so, the rewards are worth it.

10. A good rule for dealing with people you rely on in your work is "don't burn your bridges behind you." In other words, never cross someone whom you think you may need again.

11. I figure that anyone who has been able to put together a good piece of professional work is entitled to use it and get credit for it.

12. In this world of give and take, it seems only natural to me that people accept gifts and favors if doing so helps "grease the skids" and benefits all parties concerned.

STAGE III Statements:

13. I can see that being a good team player at my office is sometimes more important to me professionally than following my own inclinations.

APPENDIX A, cont.

14. The best places to work are those where your immediate superior sets good ethical examples of how a professional should think and act.

15. When I was just getting started in my profession, I was often willing to cooperate with my work supervisors in matters that went against my own better judgment.

16. I guess one major reason for not violating an ethical standard is that if I do, my fellow professionals would think a lot less of me.

17. I would violate a professional code of ethics if it seemed necessary to make things run smoother around my office.

18. One of the best reasons to respect one's bosses is because if you don't, the organization won't run as smoothly.

STAGE IV Statements:

19. If I am a member of professional organizations which have codes of ethics, it is important for me to exercise my responsibility by upholding those codes as best as I possibly can.

20. Unless all of us in this line of work follow one universal code of ethics, I don't see how we can consider ourselves to be a full-fledged profession.

21. As a guide to professional behavior, I think that a clear and explicitly stated set of ethical principles is far more useful than some general, ambigious concepts--such as "the public interest."

22. It seems to me that to mislead or to accept substantial favors from business associates violates the moral and/or religious codes set down throughout the ages.

23. Laws--even laws with which I disagree--are the will of the majority. As a result, it would be contradictory if I broke the law and then said I did so in the public interest.

24. So long as I had acted in accordance with my own moral code, I don't think I should be reported or punished if I had broken a law in the course of doing my job.

25. I think that if codes of ethics are not universally applied in the disciplining of violators, the integrity of the professional code is diluted.

26. It seems to me that convicted criminals who have served their "time" have the right to profit financially, in any legal manner available to them, from their prior criminal experiences.

STAGE V Statements:

27. Laws and codes of ethics should serve the greatest good for the greatest number of people; otherwise, I don't feel obligated to abide by them.

APPENDIX A, cont.

14. The best places to work are those where your immediate superior sets good ethical examples of how a professional should think and act.

15. When I was just getting started in my profession, I was often willing to cooperate with my work supervisors in matters that went against my own better judgment.

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STAGE IV Statements:

19. If I am a member of professional organizations which have codes of ethics, it is important for me to exercise my responsibility by upholding those codes as best as I possibly can.

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26. It seems to me that convicted criminals who have served their "time" have the right to profit financially, in any legal manner available to them, from their prior criminal experiences.

STAGE V Statements:

27. Laws and codes of ethics should serve the greatest good for the greatest number of people; otherwise, I don't feel obligated to abide by them.

APPENDIX A, cont.

28. I must defend the right of the Nazis to demonstrate in a Jewish community such as Skokie, Illinois, even if I detest the message they are spreading.

29. If I had access to classified documents which showed government corruption, I would publicize it even though I would be violating the law and would likely be jailed or heavily fined.

30. Since it is highly important for society to be exposed to Richard Nixon's view of events surrounding his resignation, I think he has the right (as would anyone in similar circumstances) to profit from his tv interviews and his memoirs.

STAGE VI Statements:

31. It is important for me to stand by a professional promise I have made to someone in order to affirm that this person's rights are just as important as my own; keeping promises affirms the worth and dignity of the other person as an individual.

32. When it comes right down to it, I believe conscience and principle are more valuable to professionals than codes of ethics--and perhaps even more valuable than laws.

APPENDIX B:

ETHICAL SITUATIONS SORT

CATEGORY A Statements:

1. If stories I had done about a company had caused a temporary drop in its stock, I would not invest in the stock even though I knew it would go up again substantially.

2. If I were going to write a local dealer about, say, a lemon of a car I'd just purchased, I would not hesitate to put my complaint on the letterhead of my news organization.

CATEGORY B Statements:

3. It just doesn't seem right to me to reveal the name of an "off-the-record" source to anyone—not even to my editor who might question me regarding the source's credibility.

4. I'd rather not spend the night (or nights) in jail, but I'd do it before I'd ever reveal a confidential source.

5. When a source with a distinctive speech style talks to me under non-attribution, I'll quote him directly (without name) even though many in the community will probably recognize his unique way of putting things.

6. Protecting a confidential source simply means not reporting the name; it doesn't mean I have to risk going to jail to protect every source—good, bad and indifferent—I talk with.

CATEGORY C Statements:

7. If an F.B.I. agent offered to give me first break on some important arrests in exchange for information I had that would help make their case—I just couldn't go along with that.

8. To remain absolutely above reproach as a journalist, I will never accept anything—money, gifts, even a drink—from a source.

9. There are some stories that I'd be willing to "ignore" if the person or organization that wants to avoid bad publicity were willing to pay me.

10. I know some people in journalism are opposed to a reporter's accepting any freebies—tickets, meals, drinks, gifts, etc.—but it seems to me it would be better to accept them (especially if they're small items) than to risk offending an otherwise valuable source.

CATEGORY D Statements:

11. If a government agent (CIA, FBI) asked me to kill a story on the ground of national security, I'd probably do it.

APPENDIX B, cont.

12. If I discovered that the governor was having an extra-marital affair, I don't think I should try to report it so long as the affair did not seem to affect the governor's job performance.

13. If I had information that pretty clearly suggested that a local man had been technically engaged in espionage, I'd have to report the story even if the man called pleading me not to and warning he would commit suicide.

14. If I discovered that a woman running for mayor had had psychiatric care for a nervous breakdown some 25 years earlier, I would be obligated to report it.

CATEGORY E Statements:

15. If I had discovered the time and place of a ransom drop but knew that if I showed up I could jeapordize the kidnap victim, I would not go—even though I'd lose a great first-hand story.

16. A reporter is in the position to keep all parties in a controversy informed about each other's activities; since this can only help to make my story bigger and better, you can bet I'd do it.

CATEGORY F Statements:

17. I would never let a source believe he or she would get prominent positive mention in my story just so I could get more and better information.

18. Even if I found a source personally and sexually attractive, I would not have sex with him or her just to get information.

19. I think a good way to "light a fire" under an official who is sitting on a story is to tell the official that I'm going to report what I know and name him or her in the story as one withholding information.

20. If I thought it would improve my story, I'd be willing to "romance" a source of the opposite sex a little bit.

CATEGORY G Statements:

21. While I might "fail to mention" I was a reporter to someone in order to get information, I would never tell a person I was someone I'm not.

22. Something I would never do is to tell public officials I am working on one story while in fact I am gathering information for quite a different story.

23. Even if I thought it would help a source to "open up," I could never show him or her a document I had faked up, under the pretense that it was real.

24. If I wanted to observe someone but knew the person would recognize me, I'd wear a disguise.

25. When I think a source is holding out on me, I'll encourage the source to tell me more by creating the impression that I already know what's being concealed.

APPENDIX B, cont.

26. If there had just been a shooting and I knew I'd get better information in a call to the police by identifying myself as a deputy coroner, I'd probably do it.

CATEGORY H Statements:

27. Anything that a person leaves exposed on a desk is still private information and I will not attempt to read it even if I could do so easily.

28. Even though I could get some important information for a story, I would never eavesdrop through a wall or closed door or at an unattended telephone extension.

29. If I have to steal something to make a story go (no matter how trivial the "something"), the story isn't worth it.

30. One of the best ways to get "inside" information when there is a closed meeting involving a large number of people, is simply to wander in and act as if I belong.

31. In order to get some solid material for a study I was doing on local crime, I wouldn't hesitate to arrange and make a drug buy.

32. Some stories are important enough to use a wiretap in order to get information.